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**The Historical and Scientific Society  
of Manitoba.**

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**THE OLD CROW WING TRAIL**

— BY —

**HON. JOHN SCHULTZ, M.D., F. Imp. I.**

**LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR OF MANITOBA,**

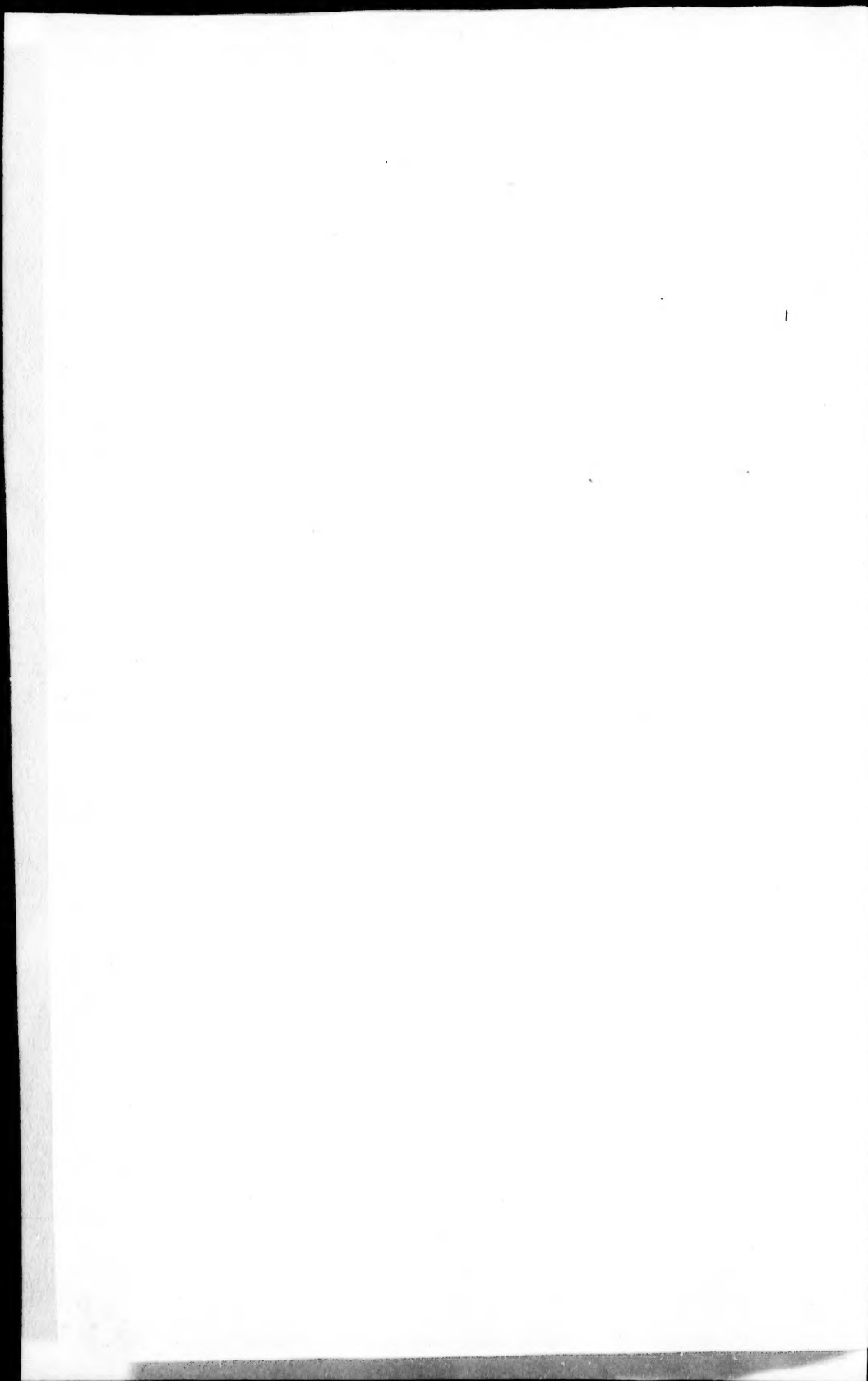
**A LIFE MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY.**

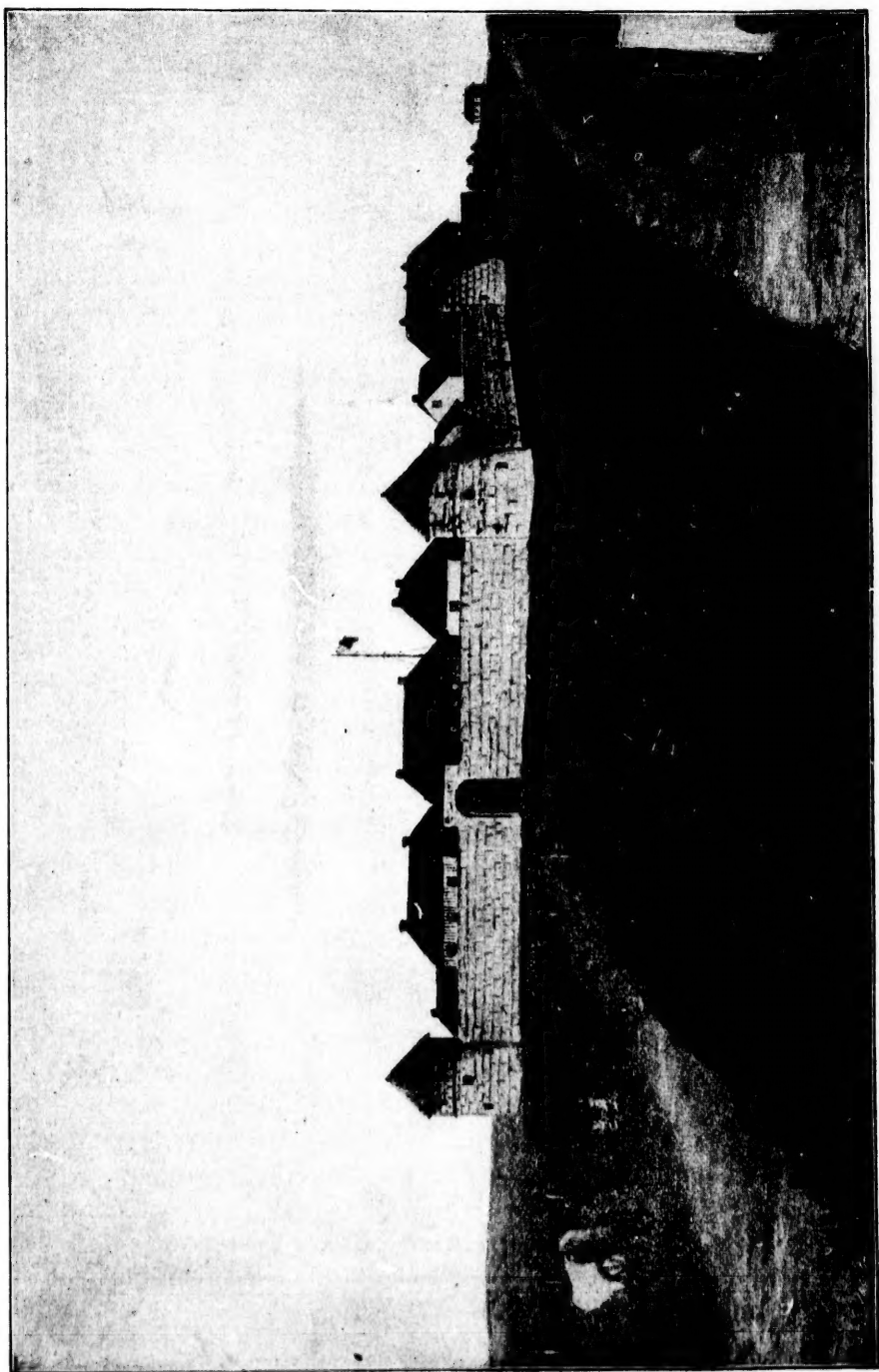
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**WINNIPEG:**

**MANITOBA FREE PRESS PRINT.**

**1894.**





FORT GARRY IN 1860.

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## The Old Crow Wing Trail.

*Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen.*

It has fallen to my lot to have seen and traversed, with the exception of part of one, all the summer and winter roads which, many years ago, connected the Red River or Selkirk settlement with the outer world, and they may be enumerated as follows :

1. The old North West Company's route, from the mouth of the Kaministiquia through Shebandowan, Lac des Mille Lacs, the beautiful lakes and streams of the height of land between Superior and Lake Winnipeg to Rainy Lake, the lovely river which drains it into the Lake of the Woods, that lake and the river which bears its waters to Lake Winnipeg, which with its rapids, chutes and falls is, I think, unsurpassed in beauty by any river of Laurentian Canada.

2. The Hudson's Bay York Factory route, too well known to need any description, and of which I have only seen a part.

3. The Breckenridge Flats route, skirting the west bank of the Red River to near where it receives the name at the junction of the Sioux Wood and Ottertail rivers, and crossing the Red River at Georgetown or Abercrombie to traverse to the Ottertail Ford the flats which gave the route its name, and enter the rolling lake-dotted country which lay between it and St. Cloud on the Mississippi, 80 miles above St. Paul.

4. The winter monthly mail carriers' dog train route of the old days, which, crossing the Red River at Fort Pembina, sought for shelter and night encampment the skirting of Minnesota woods at the sources of the eastern affluents of the Red River, as far as Red Lake, crossing which on the ice it traversed many of the small lakes which form the extreme headwaters of the great Mississippi down to Leech Lake, and thence southward, passing through mazes of small lakes and through the hunting-grounds of the "Pillagers," to the junction of the Crow Wing with the Mississippi River, and then

down the east bank of that stream to Fort Ripley, Sauk Rapids and St. Anthony, to St. Paul.

5. The military stage and early Red River steamer route, which connected St. Paul with Fort Garry in 1860.

6. The Dawson route, which cut off the laborious navigation of the Kaministiquia River by a road to Lake Shebandawan, using thence the old water route of the North West Co., with dams on several streams, better landings and improved portages to the Lake of the Woods and the North West Angle, from which a road had been cut to St. Anne and St. Boniface, thus saving the broken navigation of the Winnipeg River, the crossing of the head of Lake Winnipeg, and the ascent of the Red River.

7. The old Crow Wing Trail, opened in 1844 by a few adventurous spirits under direction of William Hallett, who, having been attacked by the Sioux on their way to St. Paul by Lac Travers and St. Peter, sought safety in returning by this route, many miles of which had to be cut through the woods.

Of these seven routes of travel I have, Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, chosen the last-mentioned because, unlike most of the others, it may not be traversed to-day. The ploughshare of the Minnesota settler has obliterated its once deeply marked triple track, and even where, like the old buffalo paths of Southwestern Manitoba, these may in some places be distinguished, the fence of the old and the new settler bars the way.

Another reason may be found in the fact that over it I made my first prairie journey, that from one of its encampments I saw the last herd of buffalo ever seen east of the Red River, and that though I am about to describe it as seen by me in a peaceful journey late in the fall of 1860, I was to traverse it again when comparatively disused during the year of the Sioux massacre in Minnesota, as the only hope of reaching Fort Garry from St. Paul, where I then was, when a camp fire was out of the question, each river-ford and bluff



of timber to be avoided, and a stealthy Indian tread to be fancied in the rustle of every leaf.

Coming up from Kingston in the spring of 1860 by way of the lakes to Chicago, one railway only was then in existence in the direction I wished to travel, its termination being Prairie-du-Chien, on the Mississippi. From this point the only connection to St. Paul, then a large frontier town and trading post, was by steamers built for the navigation of the upper Mississippi, and well do I remember my first look at these extraordinary boats; accustomed as I was to seeing the vessels used on the great lakes, where strength and solidity is required, they seemed frail to absurdity in contrast. The supports of the upper decks, scarcely heavier than the trellis work of grape vines, were called stanchions; and I discovered that two inch oak was considered heavy planking for these extraordinary craft. The boiler was on deck, the four feet of hold not of course having room for it, and the power was conveyed to an immense wheel at the stern, which, extraordinary as it looked to one accustomed to the heavy side wheels and screws of the steam craft on other waters, was yet found to serve an admirable purpose when approaching the shallows and sand bars in the upper part of the river.

No ordinary rule of navigation seemed to be followed in the running of these steamers; and watching everything with the curiosity and interest of nineteen, I especially marked the method in which the "heaving of the lead," which was ordered from the wheel-house, as we approached some shallow navigation, was carried out by the mate on the fore-deck. That functionary first seated himself near the bow, with his legs hanging over the unbulwarked deck, and in this position, with a ten-foot pole, the lower four feet of which were painted alternately red and white, he plunged it into the water, announcing as he drew it up "three feet full;" plunged again, he announced "three feet scant;" another effort brought "two-and-a-half feet;" then the bell rang and the steamer's speed was decreased, and when "only two feet" was announced, the



order was given to "back her." Her bow was then turned towards another part of the bar, and when "two feet full" was announced as the result of the next effort, the bell was rung "go ahead," and the steamer "North Star" wriggled with an eel-like motion, which set the glasses jingling in the cabin, and made one feel as though riding an hippopotamus, over the deepest part of the bar, when "two-and-a-half feet," "three feet," "three-and-a-half feet," were announced in quick succession, followed by another dip of the pole which, passing beyond the four foot mark, brought the announcement from the mate, who rose at that moment to put away his pine lead-line: "no bottom."

Fine weather, and the beautiful scenery along the banks of the upper Mississippi, made the trip a pleasant one, and brought us safely to St. Paul; Minnehaha was visited, and the Falls of St. Anthony, as well as the beautiful and historic promontory, then crowned by Fort Snelling; then came the question of the remainder of the journey, over 650 miles, which lay between that city and Fort Garry.

The first stage line had just been given the contract for the carriage of the mails to the then remote military outpost of Fort Abercrombie, with a bonus large enough to induce the contractors to agree to the stipulation demanded by the government, that the mails should be carried in "overland" coaches with four horses; and these military conditions facilitated my traversing that part of the journey. Shortly before this Anson Northrup, a well known Upper river steamboatman, had brought a small steamer, named after himself, during the spring flood up to near the head of the Mississippi River, and from there had portaged the machinery and the boat, in sections, over to the head waters of the Red River, and the boat, which had been rebuilt and christened the "Anson Northrup," was then lying at Georgetown, the Hudson's Bay Company's temporary transportation post, 45 miles north of Abercrombie.

The journey on this stage was a pleasant one; the beautiful Minnesota lakes and rivers, on which temporary stage

stations had been built, lent a great charm to it, which all have felt who have in summer traversed this route. At Georgetown, so named after Sir George Simpson, I inspected the craft which was to take us by the river about 500 miles to Fort Garry. It was a miniature edition of the Mississippi steamer, but there was an ominous look about the wheel-house, however, which was on all sides heavily protected by four inch oak planks, which the captain did not allay by saying "Of course you have your gun along with you." Further investigation shewed an arrangement by which cordwood for fuel could be so piled while the vessel was steaming on her course as to protect the lower deck from bullets. The good-natured engineer also shewed me a contrivance by which, at a moment's notice, he could turn a stream of hot water and scalding steam upon any body of Indians who might strive to take possession of the boat in case it should accidentally strike the bank, or land for additional fuel. All this was very new, very strange and very attractive to a young fellow who had only heard of such matters from incidental reading of Indian wars and forays, and when further explained, it appeared that the Red Lake Indians, after further thought, had become dissatisfied with the conditions of the treaty made with them by Governor Ramsay, of the then Territory of Minnesota, and proposed to prevent whites passing through or occupying their country till a new arrangement had been made.

Near Abercrombie I met the noted frontiersman George Northrup, in whose log cabin were a few books which showed superior culture. He had made himself familiar with the Ojibway tongue, and his home was secured by the presence of the forces at Fort Abercrombie; he had run the gauntlet of the forays between the Sioux and the Ojibways and yet retained the scalp which, poor fellow, he was afterwards to lose when acting as a scout for the General commanding the column, which, after the Sioux massacre of 1862, followed the Sioux to the crossing of the Missouri. He was to be one of the defenders of the boat; and his knowledge of their lang-

uage was to be brought into play in case of a parley with the irate Indians.

A detention of two weeks at Georgetown waiting for some small portions of machinery, however, saved us from difficulty with the Indians, none of whom we saw on our guarded passage down the river, they having probably gone back to their hunting grounds near Red Lake.

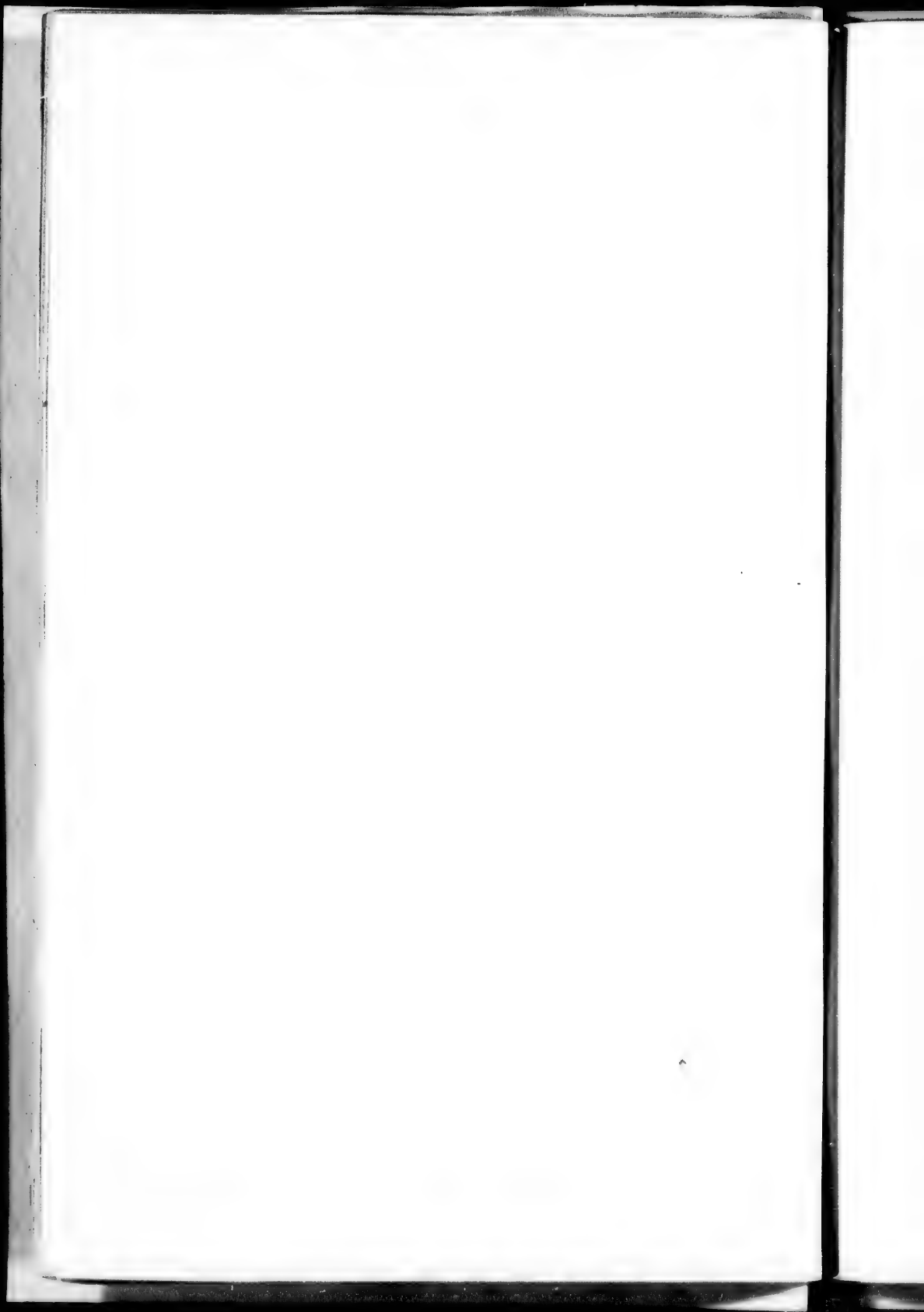
Pembina was reached, then only half a dozen houses ; the boundary line was crossed, then Fort Pembina, (the Hudson's Bay Company's wooden stockade) came in view. Thirty miles below we reached the first of the Red River settlements, the inhabitants congregating on the banks to see the strange steamer passing ; and it was with intense interest that we reached at last the bend of the river which disclosed the twin-towered cathedral of St. Boniface ; another bend, and Fort Garry came in view ; a straight run along the present course of the Winnipeg Rowing Club was traversed, when, turning up the Assiniboine to land where Main Street bridge now is, the groves, church and tower of St. John's could be seen across the almost blank intervening space ; and the steam whistle once belonging to a very much larger steamer, which had been blowing almost continuously for the previous half hour, brought, I think, what must have been very nearly every living human being for two miles around to the sloping bank where the steamer landed. Ascending this bank, Fort Garry, so often heard of, was inspected ; and even then time and an imperfect foundation had left cracks in the stone walls. It seemed, however, a place which a very few men could hold against a number unprovided with artillery ; for the bastions were pierced on all sides, not only for small arms, but cannonades were mounted at each embrasure. The front gate was massive, like the front wall, which faced towards the Assiniboine, and was entirely flanked and protected by bastion projections, so that there was no chance for any force unprovided with artillery to make a rush on the gateway. This gate, however, was only open on special occasions, the business gate of the Fort being on its eastern side, and was simply a sally-

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WINNIPEG FROM CITY HALL.



port, where more than two men could not enter abreast. Passing down this side of the Fort was the King's highway, which led off in a northerly direction and was continued to Lower Fort Garry, or the "Stone Fort," and thence to the Peguis Reserve and the two Sugar Points. No building whatever was built upon this road; the houses of William Drever, the two of Andrew McDermott's, A. G. B. Bannatyne's, that of the Ross', Logan's, Bouvette, Brown and Inkster, being, where the land admitted of it, on the banks of the river some distance to the east.

I have said that the Cathedral of St. Boniface then possessed two towers, which have been made familiar to the whole of this continent by the beautiful description of the poet Whittier in the "Red River Voyageur." The Cathedral Church of St. John also possessed its tower, (a square and very massive one), and my first Sunday in the settlement found me one of its occupants during the morning service; and I noticed on the bordered wainscoting which extended up some height above the pews the plain evidence, on its paint work, of the extreme height, and of the gradually decreasing of the waters of the flood of 1852. From near its gate could be seen the residence of the Right Reverend Dr. Anderson, then Bishop of Rupert's Land; a building very little changed, except outwardly, built solidly of logs, and now the residence of His Grace the Primate of all Canada; and between the Church and this house stood the then closed College of St. John.

During my summer's stay I had visited the Peguis Reserve, the King's Highway which led to the Sugar Points of Mapleton, its southern border, crossing then as now the Image Plain; had seen the Kildonan Church, the Middle Church and that of St. Andrew's, and visited the Stone Fort; had seen St. James and Headingley Churches, crossed the White Horse Plains, where I saw its fine church; traversed "Le Grand Marais" to Poplar Point with its church, High Bluff and its place of worship, and that of the Portage, all



monuments of the earnest zeal and tireless efforts of Archdeacon Cochrane. I had seen the "Tepees" of far off tribes who had come to Fort Garry to trade, had laughed with our own Crees and Ojibways, who stood on the bank, at the unsuccessful attempt of two Plain Crees to cross the Red River in a bark canoe, these children of the prairie, whose home is on horseback, having no use for nor acquaintance with the paddle; had seen the Plain hunters come back with their loads of pemmican, dried meat, and the flesh of the buffaloes last seen by the returning brigades; had eaten of the Marrowfat and Berry pemmican, and oh, greater gustatory joy than all else, had partaken of the delicious hump, the odor and taste of which are still fresh in my memory after three and thirty years. The falling leaves and autumn tints of October 1860 reminded me, however, that I must leave for the winter this land of plenty and promise; and as the steamers had long since ceased to run, I began preparing for the trip which I am about to describe.

This road or trail, called by those at this end of it "The Crow Wing Trail," and at the other "The Old Red River Trail," was one which had been used for many years; and while our Metis and Crees were at war with the Sioux, it was considered both safer and shorter than the one on the west side of the River, until Fort Abercrombie was built; and even then was often used, as being less open to prairie fires, with better wood for encampments and high gravelly ridges to render part of it at least almost as good as a turnpike road. Its drawbacks were the many streams, eastern affluents of the Red River, which had to be forded, some of them, like the Red Lake River, being after heavy rains very formidable obstacles to loaded or even light carts. It was a favorite land route with Sir George Simpson, who died the year I first traversed it; and James McKay, his trusty and trusted voyageur, known to the English and French settlers as "Jeemie," and to the Sioux as "Jimichi," who was to become a member of the Legislative Council of Manitoba on the recommendation

of Governor Archibald, was proud of the fact that always on the tenth day of their start from Crow Wing at the stroke of noon from the Fort Garry bell he landed Sir George at the steps of the Chief Factor's House. Relays of horses enabled him to do this, rain or shine; and the slightest stoppage in muskeg or stream found McKay wading in to bring Sir George on his broad shoulders to dry land.

Fortunately for me, a more experienced head than mine had chosen the horses, selected the cart and saddle, and suggested the outfit for the journey; and, though I found soon after starting, that there were wrinkles in camp and travel that experience only can teach, still I acknowledge my indebtedness to my friend, and proceed to enumerate the outfit which he deemed sufficient to land me and the Canadian friend, who was to accompany me, safely at Crow Wing; and I give these in the order of their importance.

Two Red River ponies, who disdained oats and had never eaten of aught save prairie grass, dry or green, "Blackie" and "Bichon," both good types of their hardy class, short barrels, sturdy legs, long manes, and tails which touched their fetlocks; differing in disposition, however, Blackie having a bad eye and uncertain temper, with a disposition to smash things with his hind legs, which would have been fatal to a buggy, but was energy thrown away on a cart, when one knew how helpless he was with a clove hitch around the root of his tail with one end of a short piece of shaganappi, the other end of which was tied to the front cross bar of the cart, the eight or ten inches distance between the attached ends affording but little scope for the exercise of powers such as Blackie undoubtedly possessed. This peculiarity was not the only one of Blackie's, which would have placed him second to Bichon in this narrative, had he not some qualities useful indeed in time of trouble. He had a practice of trying to bolt when his harness was loosed, to escape the inevitable hobble without which Blackie, whose leadership Bichon, the tractable and gentle, always followed, would have left us on the prairie to our own

devices more than once ; and even with these shaganappi obstructions to his rapid locomotion he made time fast enough to make his capture, till his stomach was full, a very difficult matter. Though bad in these respects, he was good in others ; for the swamp must be deep that he could not pull a cart through ; and the bank of a stream just forded must have been steep and slippery indeed that Blackie's unshod feet could not scramble up. Bichon, the patient, would do his best and, failing, would lie down in the one or slide back to the bottom of the other. So that as we are apt, after many years, to remember the good and forget the bad, I have given the first place in this, I fear, rambling narrative, to Blackie ; though I acknowledge gratefully that it was on Bichon the obedient's back that I explored the bog or essayed the river crossing when the one was likely to be bad or the other deep. So much for the horses. The saddle was simply a tree, strapped on over a blanket, which was easier on the horses than the Indian saddle ; and the cart harness the dressed buffalo skin one of the time, with the collar and hames in one piece, short traces to iron pins in the shafts, to which also were attached the hold backs, which were the broadest and heaviest part of the harness. Shaganappi reins and a bridle with no blinkers completed this simple but efficient equipment.

Items Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 4 being now described, I come to an important one, No. 5, the cart, the popular impression of which now is that it was a ramshackle, squeaky affair, with wheels five feet high, each one of which dished outwardly, so that the felloes looked as if about to part company with the spokes and hub ; and those who have seen them as curiosities at an Exhibition wonder if the wood had shrunk, which left a loose opening where felloe joined felloe in the queerly dished wheel, or whether indeed the fellow who made these joints had been quite himself when he completed this wooden monstrosity, which had not a scrap of iron on or about it. Queer looking they undoubtedly were, as compared with the present trim buggy, though the squeak is a libel as applied to a lightly loaded travelling cart, which has been fairly treated by the

application of the scrapings of the frying pan to its axle ; yet no vehicle, I verily believe, which has been used before or since, was so suited for the traversing of a country where, in one day, it might have to travel over, with its three-inch-wide wooden tire, a shaking bog, a miry creek, a sandy shore, or a boulder strewn path up steep hills. At a cost of two pounds sterling, in the old days, one became the possessor of a vehicle, the high wheels of which made it easy to draw, the great dish of the wheels made it hard to upset, while the loose jointed felloes saved the wheel from wreck, by closing and yielding when a rock was struck in a deep river crossing, or the hidden stump in a newly cut trail was encountered. A very haven of rest wert thou, O cart, on the prairie, when, the long day of travel ended, a large square of canvas thrown over you made a tent before a camp fire better than any other, and an ark of safety when the swollen river was too deep to ford ; thy wheels off and under the box, with the same square of canvas about all, thou wast a boat made in ten minutes, in which two travellers, with their belongings, might paddle or pole from shore to shore in safety, leading the swimming horses behind.

My excuse for thus apostrophising my Red River cart as a sentient being is that, like Blackie, it had tricks of its own which puzzled the uninitiated. Attempt to ride in it in any way that one is wont to do in a civilized vehicle, and it soon *rattled* (if I may use a modern expression) its occupant, who found himself, to a musical accompaniment of frying pan and tin kettles, trying alternately to preserve himself from being pitched onto the pony, having his right or left ribs cracked against the side rail, or turning a somersault over the tail-board of the cart. No, there is only one way to ride in a cart with ease and pleasure, and that is seated in front on its floor, with your legs hanging down near the horse's tail. If you are luxurious, tie a broad piece of shaganappi from rail to rail to support your back, put an extra folded blanket under you, sway your body slightly with Blackie or Bichon's jog-trot, and you need not envy the occupants of a coach and

four. N. W., better known as "Commodore," Kittson appreciated this fact and never would in any of his later prairie trips ride in any other way or in any other vehicle.

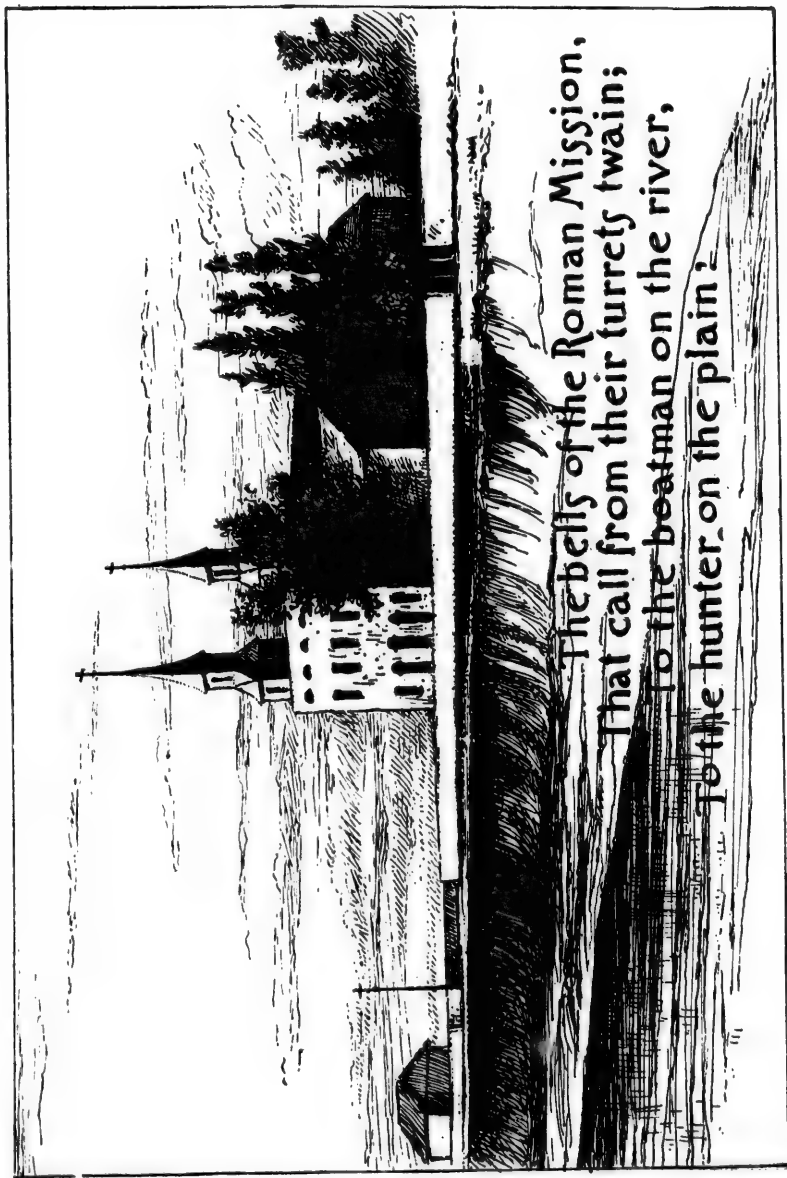
As there is only one way to ride in a cart, so there is only one way of stowing its accessories; the most important of which is your half-sized axe. Put into the cart by a green hand, this useful implement becomes an engine of destruction; cuts into your packages of tea, etc., ruins your blankets and jolts along till its long handle reaches far over the tail board, and an extra jump tumbles it on to the trail, to delight the heart of the first Indian who passes, but to cause you to be extremely sorrowful when you have to make camp with a jack-knife, or replace an old axle. No, the axe should take no risks, and must have a leather socket for its head and a strap for its handle, and both outside the cart on one of the side boards. The gun is the next in importance; and for that, too, there is only one way, if you are not to risk shooting yourself or your companion. The butt must rest near your seat on the left side, the barrels in a loop to the top rail at an angle of 45 degrees, this arrangement, while making its carriage quite safe, enabling you to seize it quickly while yet the prairie chicken or duck is passing.

Not so dangerous as the two former, but infinitely more difficult to manage are the frying-pan, with its long handle, and the copper and tin kettles, to put the one loose into the cart was to blacken and smear all its contents; while the kettles, after a preliminary row-de-dow, would speedily part with their bales and lids, batter themselves into uselessness against the sides, and then jump out bodily on to the track. No, having tried many ways with kettles, I have come to the conclusion that only when inside one another and lashed securely below the centre of the axle, where they may jingle in peace, are they to be circumvented. As for the frying-pan, having been so often entirely beaten in attempts to muzzle one, I have long ago given up any thought of rendering innocuous that jingling, banging, crooked, perverse but indispensable w/Janet to prairie travel.

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The cart cover I have incidentally mentioned ; this must be large and light, so as to completely envelope the cart, either as a tent or boat, and is preferable to a tent for light travelling, as it saves the carriage of pins and poles, may be used by the tired traveller much sooner at night, and may be folded in the grey dawn by the still half-asleep voyageur without tripping over pegs or ropes.

As prairie chicken and duck were abundant, the substantials for the trip were as follows :—Pemmican (marrowfat if possible) 20 pounds, hard biscuit, 30 pounds, tea, sugar, butter and salt ; a little flour, to make the "Rubbiboo" assume a bulky appearance when Indians had to be breakfasted or dined, their mid-day entertainment being generally avoided by giving them a biscuit each, and keeping on ourselves with a lunch of pemmican "au naturel ;" a pair of blankets each, a couple of buffalo robes, then costing 12 shillings sterling each our clothes in a couple of waterproof bags, and Lo ! the expedition was complete.

The voyage proper did not commence till Pembina was reached, for the traveller who brought the latest news and could speak a little French was always sure of the best they had in the way of bed and board at any of the houses of the Metis, whose settlement extended then half way to Pembina. One's horses too were always included in the generous hospitality, and Blackie and Bichon ate of the sweetest of the recently mown prairie grass. The second night was invariably passed at Pembina post, where the H. B. officer in charge (a predecessor of an esteemed member of our Society, Chief Factor Clark), extended similar hospitality on a better scale, and saw you safe on to the ferry in the morning. We had arrived at Pembina, had eaten buffalo steak for supper, had slept in a civilized bed, had porridge for breakfast, followed by buffalo steaks again, the first helpings of which were taken from the bottom of the liberal pile, to give point to the worthy master's standing explanation, that the Company's cooks always put the best at the bottom, I suppose for their own delectation after their master's meal was over. Our worthy host's close

scrutiny of our horses and equipment seemed to be satisfactory save that he insisted on his present of a little dried buffalo meat, which he said went far when you met Indians, and on learning that it was my first essay at prairie travel, urged me to take a young Indian part of the way to put us on the right track. This was a damper, for the trail on the east bank was in full view, going up from the ferry landing, and the line of the Red River skirting woods, through which it had been cut, could be distinctly seen, and so while middle age experience on the bank expostulated and advised, youthful ignorance and over-confidence at the horses' heads on the ferry thanked and assured, till the ferry touched the opposite bank, up which Blackie quickly sprang, anxious to be away from his floating footing, which yawed and jerked in the passage across. Alas, when was ever the confidence of the young justified as against the experience of their elders? The tracks, triple marked, were plain enough till the outer limit of the skirting woods was reached, and then they began diverging like the ribs of a fan, but as they all led through a low savannah, ignorance, to wit, myself, assumed that they would converge again on higher ground, and so the best marked of them was followed.

It was noticed that the trail we had chosen was a circuitous one, if we were to reach by it the first camping place on the bank of the "Two Rivers," but we supposed that to be due to the necessity of reaching higher ground; doubts, however, about it were set at rest after a couple of hours' travel, by its ending abruptly at the hay stack behind a willow bluff which had concealed it. There was nothing for it but to return and essay another track, which brought us to where hay had been cut and carted away; a third venture having failed, and the day being far spent, we gladly availed ourselves of the services of a Metis boy, who piloted us to where we could see the aspen bluff near the ford of the first river we had to cross. "Experientia docet" generally when too late; and the day ended with tired horses, and only a short part of a day's journey traversed. The two rivers, with their muddy, miry banks and bottoms, were crossed at dusk, for it is a rule in

prairie travel always to encamp at the further side of the stream, that the morning's start may be made with dry clothes and fresh horses; and while Blackie and Bichon are recruiting their energies on the rich grass of ungrazed savannah land, let me give a brief account of the character of this old trail from Pembina to Crow Wing. The low savannah country dotted with willow bluffs, such as I have mentioned, and which is drained by the two rivers, extends from Pembina to the Tamarac River crossing, about thirty-five miles from Pembina; and the traveller, after fording this, the Middle and Snake Hill rivers, all branches of one stream, enters upon a country of fine gravel ridges, running in the main north and south, with a growth of aspen willow and balsam poplar flanking them, the delicate catkins, buds and leaves of which in the early spring make them look like a long avenue where the landscape gardener has been at work. This extends nearly all the long way from the Snake Hill to the Sand Hill River, where the old gravel ridges of former lakes trend off too much to the east, and the trail crosses a high dry prairie which is fairly good for travel, but yet is unlike the voyageur's paradise I have just described, and I may as well explain why. The three essentials of prairie travel are wood, water and grass; and the swamp-flanked, tree-bordered ridges I have described furnished these in their perfection. Ducks and prairie chicken constantly flying up, good encampments anywhere to right or left of track, safety from prairie fires, which cannot run in such a country, and the best of pasturage till the snow falls, for the ponies; while on the other hand the dry level prairie affords no safety from the mad rush of the fierce fires its now dried herbage, save the objectionable one of starting another to your leeward; there are long stretches between watering places, wood only on river banks, and no shelter from any preliminary canter which old Boreas may choose to take before he settles down to his winter's pace; and as it was the 18th of October before we started on our journey, the beautiful Indian summer night or might not last us through our trip.

Level high treeless prairie was to be traversed thence to the Red Lake River and far beyond it till the Wild Rice was reached, and there the country changed, with heavy boulders on the hills and multitudes of small lakes fringed with small oaks; this continued to Detroit Lake, a beautiful sheet of water, now, I believe, a pleasure and health resort, some of its gravel hills being then distinguishable for miles by the high stages bearing the bodies of the dead, from which fluttered pieces of red and blue cloth; and near them the remains of food placed for the spirit's early journey to hunting-grounds, which the Ojibways must have thought good indeed if better than near this very spot, which afforded the best an Indian could desire of all the deer and fowl of that beautiful lake district; where every stream teemed with fish, and buffalo once were plentiful low down on the river which bears their name only three days journey away. The trail followed at the edge of the water this beautiful lake for nearly two miles and the ponies chose to walk in the shallow water to cool their unshod feet, sorely tired by our hasty crossing of many leagues of burnt prairie to reach where grass could again be had. We had reached this lake late at night, and already Blackie and Bichon were eating, as if for a wager, of the rushes and rich grass above the sand line on its shore; when a kettle of tea, a few biscuits and some dried meat being disposed of, weary limbs sought rest. Where should we sleep? Why, what could be better than a bed on this clean white sand, which the last high wind has piled up as if for that special purpose? Hurriedly the cart was drawn over the highest, finest and softest ridge, and then a blanket and to sleep. How easily and softly the sand yielded till it made a bed like a plaster cast; no downy couch equalled it; and yet when morning dawned it was another case of "experientia docet." No, I have since that night slept on the axe-hewn planks of a frontiers-man's floor, on the prairie, in a canoe, on smooth Laurentian rocks, and I give each and all the preference to soft white sand, no bed more unyielding when it has you in its embrace; and no wonder my friend and I woke

with a feeling as though we had been kicked all over by Blackie, and resolved to sleep anywhere or to sit up all night, rather than sleep in sand again.

Leaving this lake the country changes again, with frequently dense woods of small oaks, basswood and elm; this continues through the low-lying country, the Leaf Mountains being well to our left till we reach Rush Lake, the Ottertail River and Ottertail Lake, from there down to the crossing of the Crow Wing River the trail follows the Leaf River, which, first a stream that one could jump across, carries waters which reach the ocean at the Gulf of Mexico, as the Ottertail carries waters which reach Hudson's Bay. To call the apex a height of land is a misnomer, for it is one of the softest and apparently most low-lying parts of the route, and many a worn-out axle and broken wheel attest the power of its stumps and coulees to make the spring and fall brigades of loaded carts look well to their gearing before entering upon this most difficult part of the trail. The crossing of the Crow Wing effected, the trail led down its eastern bank, heavily wooded with Norway and White Pine, interspersed with tamarac swamps. Where you passed through the first of these, the road was all that could be desired, the straight stems of these northern palms looking like stately colonnades, through and between which your horses' hoofs were muffled in the leaves of last year, but where the tamarac grows, look out for trouble, for where uncorduroyed, it is treacherous indeed. Newly corduroyed, however, with the bark still on the tamarac poles, and these laid straight and close, it is, though bumpy, a sure road for unshod hoofs, and safe enough for the cart, but when hundreds of horse and ox-carts, the former with eight hundred, the latter with one thousand pounds, have passed over it for some years, then this tamarac highway shews what it can really do in the way of smashing wheels, tripping up beasts of burden, whether with cloven or solid hoofs, and causing much questionable language to be used by the drivers thereof. Replacing a broken pole would be anywhere easy, but the driver of the first cart trusts that this will be done by the next, and the next, by the next,

till all have passed, and then all join in the hope that the next brigade will really take the matter in hand. It was about at its worst when we passed, but with my companion and myself on opposite sides to brace up Blackie when he slipped sideways, leaving the surefooted Biehon to pick his own way at a snail's pace on the outer rim of this wretched causeway, we reached the further end of the "long corduroy," at the middle of whose three miles some wag had nailed a barrel stave to a tree, on which was a notice written with a red lead pencil "No riding or driving over this bridge faster than a walk."

Crow Wing, a frontier trading village, was reached at last, fifteen days' journey for the four hundred miles; and we fared sumptuously on fried bacon and many triangular cuts of apple pie. The remainder of the road, being over bridged streams and ferries, needs no special mention, but Crow Wing warrants some slight notice, for near it was the Chippewa Indian agency, and hard by the new residence of "Hole in the Day," then a noted Ojibway chief. This man, who was the son of a chief, possessed great influence over the various bands of that tribe, whose hunting grounds extended far to the east, west and north, and it had been hard to convince him that these bands were right in disposing of their rich lacustrine region where the wild rice grew everywhere, fish thronged every lake and stream, and of wild bird and beast there was no stint; but when were Indian treaties fair to both contracting parties? Hole in the Day must be cajoled; and accordingly he had been, a year or two before, taken to Washington to see his "Great Father." The Great Father promptly, after the first interview, turned him over to the Indian Department, who made his straight athletic figure look ridiculous in a black broadcloth suit and tall black silk hat, and, thus arrayed, showed him the circus, the theatre, the dime and other museums, the Navy Yard, and finally seated him in the gallery of the Talking Teepee, where, no doubt, he contrasted the orator who was not heard, and the assembled wisdom who did not listen, with the stately dignity and decorum of an Indian Council. Educated half-Indian men, engaged by the Govern-



ment, incessantly urged the advantage of a civilized occupation of his country, bought for him everything that caught his fancy, heaped up presents for his wives, promised that a white man's house should be built for him and furnished exactly as he liked, hinted darkly at the war power of the Great White Chief, and said that while he lived the Great Father would give to him many bags of Mexican dollars yearly; Hole in the Day gave in, shook hands with the President, and came back to persuade his bands that the white chief and he were brothers, and that Red and White were to be one in heart.

Poor 'Hole in the Day'; the residence stipulation was carried out, his wives living in the kitchen and he, the brother of the Great White Chief, received visitors in the large parlor, the walls of which were nearly covered by mirrors, the floor furniture consisting principally, it is said, of many rocking chairs. A few months later he was shot by an Indian of one of the treaty bands, on whom the truth had dawned that his tribe had sold their heritage for less than they could have obtained by the trapping of its furs.

Crow Wing was the point to which from St. Paul the masters of brigades frequently teamed with wagons a portion of their cartloads to save the heavy sand road down the eastern bank of the Mississippi. At Crow Wing the carts were finally loaded, it being a work of thought and care to so apportion the cart-loads that one should not carry all the heavy goods and another all the light; where, also, the cart covers of raw beef or buffalo hide securely fastened on and the long slow journey commenced, the money not spent at St. Paul was generally got rid of here in necessities for the trip of over a month, and in presents for the loved ones at home.

One part of the equipment of a number of carts in a brigade was a long and strong rope for river crossings and soft places which a light travelling cart traversed safely with an extra spurt on Blackie or Bichon's part, but which were formidable obstacles for loaded carts, especially at the steep bank of a slippery and muddy river crossing. In such places

the ox, strange to say, was better in the miry bottom and the horse the better for the steep bank ; for the cloven hoof parted in the mire, giving a better footing to aid his patient and great strength ; while the horse's hoofs gave him a better hold on the slippery bank ; both needed aid however when a deep slough was reached or streams of the kind I have mentioned had to be crossed ; at such places, if not very bad, the rope was attached to each cart as it came up and five or six of the men at the further end aided the struggling ox or horse just at the right moment ; but when the bog or slough was very bad indeed, then the animals were taken out to find their own way over, while the whole force of brigade men pulled the loaded cart through.

Many a thousand tons of freight have been carried over this road, and a brigade frequently meant hundreds of carts ; on the fall trip they generally went down light, the buffalo robe catch having been carried in closely compressed bales of ten robes each by the spring brigades, the arrival of which in St. Paul was an event not only to the fur-buyers, but to the people of the place, who lined the side-walks as the long train of squeaking, fur-laden carts passed through, and English half-crowns and sovereigns were to be had at almost any of the shops, all of which eagerly sought the Red River trade.

It is time however that I came back to our own experiences of travel, some of which were amusing afterwards, but very puzzling and annoying at the time. One of these was the crossing of the Red Lake, the largest river on the route. A winding track through large elm trees had brought us down to its brink, and here we could see the deep tracks of loaded carts straight over the gravel shore and into the water ; directly opposite were similar tracks on the other side. It seemed all right, though the ford was at a place where the water ran very swiftly indeed. Pursuing our usual plan, Bichon with the saddle tried the ford, but the water was soon above his breast. He was brought back, and the tracks going in and coming out closely inspected again to see if it was straight across. Tried on foot with a long pole to keep

from being swept off my feet in the rapid, the water was soon breast high. What could be the matter? Surely where loaded carts could go so shortly ago we might easily pass; and there had been no late rains to swell the river. Searching back to the top of the bank we could find no diverging track to another part of the river, and yet it was clearly a case of swim to cross it here. Tired with the effort, the horses were allowed to graze, and tea was made, after which the essay was made to cross the river on foot at a point further up, where broken water seemed to show shallowness, and it was while essaying this that I found the secret of the ford. The carts had indeed entered straight into the water at the foot of the sloping bank we had descended, but, once in, they had turned up-stream to make the crossing in a horse shoe fashion which brought them out directly on the opposite side, where again a sloping bank formed the best path for ascent and descent.

Many minor difficulties at other places were the rewards of inexperience, and, pleasant as the trip had been, it was a relief when it was over, the ponies placed in careful hands for the winter, the cart and harness stowed away, and St. Paul was reached, early in November, long after Dr. Anderson, Bishop of Rupert's Land, had reached the City by the last Red River boat and stage, and had met while there Governor, then Senator, Seward, an interesting account of which meeting was afterwards given by Honorable J. W. Taylor to the St. Paul Press, as follows:—

“Allow me to present to the readers of the Press a relic of Seward's visit to St. Paul in Sept., 1860, which I have fyled with the archives of the Historical Society. It is an address of David Anderson, Bishop of the Church of England, Rupert's Land, to Wm. H. Seward, then Senator, and now Secretary of State. The meeting of the two men had been arranged by mutual friends—it occurred at 12 o'clock m., of September 18, 1860, in the room of the Minnesota Historical Society. The Bishop adopted the English custom on such occasions, and read his remarks from a manuscript; Seward's

response was less premeditated. I copy from the autograph address of his "Reverend Lordship."

"Governor Seward :

It is with no little pleasure that I embrace the opportunity of being presented to you on this occasion.

From the position which I occupy in the Diocese of Rupert's Land, I cannot but feel a deep and growing interest in the welfare of the United States, and more especially in that of Minnesota, which immediately adjoins our own territory. Whatever tends to advance our prosperity will at the same time, I am convinced, advance also your own, and I trust that the bonds which unite us together will be drawn closer year by year.

The visit of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales to the possessions of the British Crown on this continent, and his approaching visit to the United States, may be hailed as an event which is calculated to cement most happily the union between the two countries. On the establishment and continuance of such peaceful relations the progress of civilization through the world and the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom would materially depend.

I would gratefully acknowledge the many great benefits already received from your Government at our own distant land. Much has been done during the past eleven years, of which alone I can speak, to diminish the distance which separates us from the home of our fathers. On my first arrival thrice only a year could we expect to hear from England. We are now indebted to yourselves for a double mail each month. For this, in the name of every member of our community, I would express our deep and lasting gratitude.

We would look beyond this to the opening, at no very remote period, of a highway towards the western sea. I trust that, both in your own possessions and in the British territory, a route towards the Pacific may ere long be completed and a direct communication thus opened from sea to sea. In such enterprises I would at the present time ask you to use whatever weight of influence you may possess in your own

Legislature, and I would in return assure you that any such efforts would meet with the earnest and hearty co-operation of those over whom the Providence of God has placed me.

In conclusion, I would only pray that the spirit of harmony and peace may ever exist between Britain and the United States, and with the continuance of such peace I would anticipate a bright and blessed spread of the Gospel of Peace among the nations of the earth."

With the last sentence, uttered in the excellent prelate's most impressive manner, all eyes turned upon the statesman of New York. His first words of response startled the expectant circle.

"Bishop," he said, "two hundred years ago there was an irrepressible conflict in England. One party contended for a Church without a Bishop and a State without a King; another party was certain that there could be no Church without a Bishop, and no well ordered State without a King."

A pause. The Bishop of Rupert's Land was not comfortable. An uneasy suspense of breath ran around the room. So did the grey eye of the speaker. He was evidently in the humor which His Grace of Newcastle afterwards failed so signally to appreciate. We were soon relieved, however. The Senator resumed:

"This conflict of opinion, with its immediate issues of civil war, largely contributed to the emigration of Englishmen to this continent, and the organization of diverse communities. With successive generations, the bitterness of the seventeenth century has been succeeded by new relations, by peace and good will, until we have, on this occasion, an interesting proof that the remote settlements of Selkirk and Rupert's Land respond to the 'spirit of harmony' which is alike the cause and effect of modern civilization."

His Lordships muscles relaxed. A half smile succeeded among the auditors, the speaker alone retaining an imperturbable expression of gravity. In a few words, fitly chosen but unluckily not preserved by a reporter, the Senator cordially reciprocated the sentiments of Dr. Anderson, closing the for-

malities of the interview by the Anglo-Saxon ceremony of shaking hands. The proceedings were of "admirable length," certainly not exceeding fifteen minutes; and yet, as I recall them, I have seldom witnessed a more striking tableau vivant.

Two hours later, from the steps of the Capitol, Seward addressed the citizens of Minnesota in a speech which to this day attracts more attention on both continents than any single discourse of his life. How constantly in the London press do we hear the changes rung on these memorable sentiments?

"I can stand here and look far into the North-West, and see the Russian as he busily occupies himself in establishing sea-ports and towns and fortifications, as outposts of the Empire of St. Petersburg, and I can say "go on; build up your out-posts to the Arctic Ocean; they will yet become the out-posts of my own country, to extend the civilization of my own country, to extend the civilization of the United States in the North-West." So I look upon Prince Rupert's Land and Canada, and see how an ingenious people and a capable and enlightened government are occupied with bridging rivers and building railroads to develope, organize, create and preserve the British Provinces of the North, by the Great Lakes, the St. Lawrence, and around the shores of Hudson's Bay; and I am able to say "it is very well; you are building excellent states, to be hereafter admitted into the American Union."

I was in Washington between the date of this and another speech of his to which I shall presently refer, and while yet Mr. Seward, then Secretary of State, believed in his prediction of 1860, and was honored by an introduction to the great statesman, who was then busy with his scheme for the purchase of Alaska. The angry looking scar of a dirk wound he had received in the neck from a would-be assassin was still fresh; but he had many questions to ask about this country, and after shewing me an Alaskan kyack, spear, bone implements, and many curiosities, recently sent to him, he stood with me before a large map of the continent and said



pointing to Alaska:—"We are to make this part of the United States; and now, don't you think, my dear sir, that it would be for the interest of all, if that which intervenes should come in too?"

He seemed disappointed at my answer; for already the resources of our great North-West were beginning to be known to the statesmen at Washington; and when, during the same visit, I was asked to give some facts regarding it before the standing Committee on Railways, then discussing the charter asked for the Northern Pacific line, I found a full appreciation of the possible benefits to accrue from a trade from here to different parts of the projected line.

Seward was no friend to England or to Canada; but he was truthful enough to declare his error in the forecast he had made of our political future from the Capitol steps at St. Paul in 1860, in a memorable speech he afterwards made. He had indeed obtained Alaska by purchase, but he had had time to reflect on the bitter lessons of the war for the Union of North and South, the failure of which meant the disruption of East and West as well; and he frankly acknowledged his early prophetic error in these words:

"Hitherto, in common with most of my countrymen," he said, "I have thought Canada a mere strip, lying north of the United States, easily detachable from the parent state, but incapable of sustaining itself, and therefore ultimately, nay, right soon, to be taken by the Federal Union, without materially changing or affecting its own condition or development. I have dropped the opinion as a national conceit. I see in British North America, stretching as it does across the continent, from the shores of Labrador and Newfoundland to the Pacific, and occupying a considerable belt of the temperate zone, traversed equally with the United States by the Lakes, and enjoying the magnificent shores of the St. Lawrence, with its thousands of islands in the river and gulf, a region grand enough for the seat of an Empire, in its wheat fields in the west, its broad ranges of chase at the north, its inexhaustible lumber lands, the most extensive now remaining on the globe;

its invaluable fisheries and its undisturbed mineral wealth. I find its inhabitants vigorous, hardy, energetic, perfected by religious and British constitutional liberty. I find them jealous of the United States and of Great Britain, as they ought to be; and therefore, when I look at their extent and resources, I know they can neither be conquered by the former nor permanently held by the latter. They will be independent as they are already self-maintaining. They will be a Russia to the United States, which to them will be France and England."

Statesmen are but human; and the great Secretary was mistaken again. Year by year, it is true, we know more and more of our almost inexhaustible riches of river and lake, forest and mine, and now that our neighbor's agricultural land (without irrigation) has been exhausted, we more and more appreciate the fact that Canada, *not* the United States, possesses the great cereal belt of the continent. We extol his prescience as a political economist in the matter of the development of our great resources, but when we look about for those who wish severance from Great Britain and find them only in the columns of foreign newspapers, we question his political prophecy, and remembering the giant strides our Confederation has made in material progress, and the welfare and happiness of our people, we thank God that we are Canadians and citizens of an Empire ten times greater than that which the mental vision of Seward saw from the steps of the Minnesota capitol in 1860. His national emblem is the Eagle and its swift flight typifies their marvellous advancement; ours, the Beaver, that wise, cautious builder, typifying our slower, safer progress; and who shall say that ours is not the better speed which stays to solve problems, such as the Indian one, the neglect of which has borne such bitter fruits to our more speedy southern neighbors? And yet, have Canadians any reason to be considered laggards when they have, in a little over a quarter of a century of national life, linked Province to Province, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, with bands of steel, made the head of Lake Superior a seaport, solved the

aboriginal problem with a success that no nation of the Old or New World has ever achieved, whitened every sea with the sails of Canadian ships, linked Australia, the Indies and the Empires of the East with our western harbors, as before we had linked our eastern seaboard cities with western Europe, created a trade almost double, in proportion to population, of that of the United States, touched only as yet the southern border of our vast arable and pastoral reserve, content to move slowly while we are perfecting the union of Provinces to each other, and our joint position in the Empire, in a way and with a success that will enable the distinguished nobleman whom the Queen has now chosen to represent her in her Canadian Dominion to bear to her at the close of his term of office an assurance similar to that given by a distinguished predecessor, Lord Dufferin, who said, on leaving us :

“ When I resign the temporary Vice-royalty with which I have been invested, into the hands of my Sovereign, I shall be able to assure her that not a leaf has fallen from her maple chaplet, that the lustre of no jewel in her trans-atlantic diadem has been dimmed.”



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